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Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

Letter dated 26 August 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the national report of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 44 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) M. Javad **Zarif**

* A/60/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 26 August 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

1. Dialogue among Civilizations, as a new emerging paradigm in international relation

On 21 September 1998, at the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, called for institutionalizing dialogue and "replacing hostility and confrontation with discourse and understanding." In particular, President Khatami invited the international community to broaden dialogue among civilizations to influence the maintenance of peace and security and the preservation of environment. As a first step, President Khatami proposed that "the United Nations designate the year 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, in the earnest hope that through such a dialogue the realization of universal justice and liberty may be initiated." The thrust of this initiative was an appeal to human understanding that genuine dialogue on a global scale, involving all stakeholders, offers the only practical way to ensure meaningful and effective international cooperation.

In response, the General Assembly, in its resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, decided to proclaim 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and called on governments and the United Nations to plan and implement cultural, educational and social programs to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through conferences and seminars and disseminating information.

On the eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit, a number of the Heads of State and Government assembled in a Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations, on September 5, 2000, a day before the opening of the Millennium Summit, to share their views, experience and vision for a world at peace, buoyed by dialogue, tolerance, mutual understanding and commitment. This event was aptly described by the Secretary General, as the best moral and spiritual foundation for the Summit. Subsequently, the Heads of State and Government adopted the Millennium Declaration, in which they considered, "tolerance" as one of the fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and in this context, they emphasized that "*dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted*".

In celebration and support of the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, a number of major international events and activities were launched and therefore interactive discussions on this ideal prevailed around the world. Drawing on these efforts, the General Assembly adopted the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilization in November 2001, in order to promote and develop this new emerging paradigm in various fields of international relations including peace, security, human rights and development.

As a matter of fact, the idea of Dialogue among Civilizations, throughout recent years, has engendered wide interest at the level of international organization, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and international institutions with a view to exploring practical ways for better cooperation in international relations. Great interest has also been expressed by Governments and leading public figures around the world for a renewed effort at all levels of society to encourage a dialogue among civilizations. These numerous events were held across the globe with a view to exploring enhancing the implementation mechanisms and to following up on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action. In this context, the conferences and activities looked at means of facilitating dialogue and suggested that, in addition to face-to-face encounters, traditional and new media along with multicultural education could be vital in promoting dialogue.

In this regard, UNESCO has played a pivotal role in the observance of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and it has been particularly instrumental in fostering this interest by holding conferences and seminars together with Governments, civil society and other United Nations organizations in many countries. Dialogue among civilizations has also been selected as a strategic objective by UNESCO for its medium-term strategy covering the period 2002-2007, a reflection of the organization's commitment to this process.

By the same token, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has been engaged in this process, from the outset, to promote and strengthen the culture of dialogue among civilizations. In deed, the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations was already negotiated between OIC Member States and adopted by the Twenty-seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in June 2000, before submitting it to the United Nations General Assembly, to be adopted and endorsed by all UN Member States. The OIC has also played an active role for the implementation of this Global Agenda to further promote the ideal of dialogue among civilizations. In this regard, the 31St ICFM (June 2004) adopted a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations. Furthermore, the Third Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among the OIC Member States, of March 2005 adopted "the Principles and Guidelines for the Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among OIC Member States". This document was adopted by the ICFM, held in Yemen in the end of June 2005.

Like the preceding years, 2005 has also shown that the idea of dialogue among civilizations is a must for the international community to tackle the growing threats against peace and security. During the first 6 months of this year, a number of international conferences were held around the globe to further strengthen and promote this concept in various fields:

- On 5 April 2005, the International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples convened at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. At this meeting, President Khatami urged open dialogue among civilizations as a necessary condition to improve international relations and development and called for the establishment of a Global Forum for the Promotion of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures.
- An international Conference, entitled: "Dialogue among Civilizations: Islam and the West" was held from 6 to 8 May 2005, in Quebec, Canada under the auspices of UNESCO and Laval University with the participation of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. This was the Fourth International GEPANC Conference (Political Studies on Contemporary North Africa) held at Laval University in Quebec City, on the topic of dialogue between civilisations and especially on the relationship between Islam and the West.
- The International Conference on "Environment, Peace, and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures" was held in Tehran, Iran from 9-10 May 2005, during which Tehran Declaration was adopted.
- The International Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Action was held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco from 14-16 June 2005, so as to make the dialogue among cultures and civilizations a reality of our daily life and to build on the already numerous declarations, reports and initiatives for the Dialogue among civilizations and cultures, with a view to strengthening these initiatives, making them sustainable and translating them into concrete and specific measures that can realistically be implemented within a given time-line.

- More recently, the Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace was organized under a tripartite partnership among governments, United Nations System and civili socity representing religious non-governmental organizations was held on 22 June 2005 in the United Nations in preparation for the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2005. The Conference, chaired by Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Philippines, calls upon that the Member States of the United Nations undertake, among others, practical actions such as those proposed in the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations. The Conference also invited the Secretary General to explore enhancing the implementation mechanisms and to follow up on the, inter alia, the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action of November 2001.

2. Future prospect for Dialogue among Civilizations; influencing the maintenance of international peace and security

While we may be hardly in the habit of associating dialogue among civilizations with peace and security, it is nonetheless profoundly essential. The dialogue of civilizations, in deed, calls for strong political will at the highest level to keep peace among different civilizations and in all regions and areas of the world. In this respect, the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations emphasizes that this paradigm provides important contributions to maintaining peace and security.

Furthermore and in reaction to the prospect for future dialogue, the Secretary-General of the United Nations truly emphasized that:

> *"The prospects are positive if we fully understand that cultural and religious diversity is a source of strength, not a cause for division and confrontation. .... Dialogue is possible if we accept that we live in a diverse world but share the same values of tolerance and freedom. ... The results of our interaction will be successful if we engage in respectful dialogue, where we do not pass judgment on other cultural norms before examining our own. Most importantly, Governments have to exercise the necessary political will to ensure an ongoing dialogue among various groups in society that it is carried out at all levels, from local and national to regional and international, involving all, bearing in mind that the United Nations remains the natural home of dialogue among civilizations, the forum where such dialogue can flourish and bear fruit in every field of human endeavour.* ***Without this dialogue taking place every day among all nations — within and between civilizations, cultures and groups — no peace can be lasting and no prosperity can be secure.*** *[Emphasis added]"* [1]

In deed, the idea of Dialogue among civilizations is essential if we are to be successful in achieving one of the main goals of the United Nations, i.e., to prevent conflicts, maintain international peace and security and further cooperation among Member States. By creating understanding and mutual respect, we can reduce misunderstanding and mistrust and put in place the basis for peaceful resolution of conflicts. Needless to reiterate that Dialogue is also important for other goals of the UN, including promoting the preservation of development. By sharing experiences and jointly seeking solutions, we can solve current and future economic and social problems that affect us all.

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[1] Secretary General Report: A/56/523

This is why the current international environment is in dire need of promotion of the idea of dialogue, founded on inclusion and participation and mutual respect among civilizations. The paradigm of "dialog among civilizations" is one of the most efficient means to tackle the growing threat of clash and to maintain international peace and security. This paradigm of universal vision would serve as a breeding ground for the lofty objectives of "larger freedom, development, security and human rights for all" and therefore must be the prevailing discourse of the new century, if we want to leave our future generations with a more secure and prosperous world than the one we have inherited.

In a world of interconnected threats and challenges, it is in the interest of international community to promote dialogue among civilizations so as to make progress in such areas as threats to international peace and security. We must take advantage of this paradigm, at this defining moment in history, with a view to reducing the prevalence of formidable threats, including violent conflicts and terrorism. To that end, strengthening the culture of dialogue among civilization which facilitates mutual understanding, is one of the most important elements in combating terrorism, for the fact is that, terrorism tries to make the diversity between nations the source of conflict, while the dialogue can help make that same diversity the foundation for cooperation and betterment.

Along this line, the General Assembly, adopted a resolution on December 2, 2004, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism" in which it emphasized that:

> *"[T]olerance and the enhancement of dialogue among civilizations are among the most important elements in promoting cooperation and success in combating terrorism."*[2]

Besides, the Secretary General is of the opinion that:

> *"Terrorism represents the worst of humanity, whereas the dialogue seeks to enable and promote the best in humanity. A dialogue among civilizations is not only a necessary answer to terrorism — it is in many ways its nemesis. Where terrorism seeks to divide humanity, the dialogue aims to unite us; where terrorism is based on an exclusionary, belligerent view of the world, the dialogue seeks to promote inclusion and acceptance of the notion that the possession of truth does not belong to any one group alone. Where terrorism seeks to make our diversity the source of conflict, the dialogue can help make that same diversity the foundation for betterment and growth*[3].

Furthermore, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in a resolution entitled: "call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism"[4] reiterated that:

> *" Recalling in particular that the year 2001 is being observed as United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, ... affirms that such dialogue constitutes a fundamental challenge based on the unity of humankind and commonly shared values, the recognition of its cultural diversity and the equal dignity of each civilization and each culture; ... Noting that intolerance, discrimination, inequality, ignorance, poverty and exclusion, among others, provide fertile ground for terrorism, [and] affirms that while acts of*

[2] . A/RES/59/143
[3] Secretary General Report: A/56/523
[4] Resolution adopted at the 11th plenary meeting, on 20 October 2001, 31 C/resolution 39.

terrorism can never be justified whatever the motives, the world community requires a global and inclusive vision of development based on the observance of human rights, mutual respect, intercultural dialogue and the alleviation of poverty, founded on justice, equity and solidarity, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations and segments of society;"

In the light of the above facts, it seems that the time has come for the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations to affect the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular through mechanisms dedicated to eradicate terrorism. Thus, the international community should strictly abide by commitments emanating from this paradigm, if the guiding light of this community is the needs and hopes of peoples everywhere. This approach, at this critical juncture, is a must and exigency which necessitates forging a new consensus on how to confront, *inter alia*, the threat of terrorism in the light of the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations. In other words, this idea has to be strengthened so as to contribute to the eradication of terrorism, drawing on its character as an intellectual and ethical discourse.

3. Iran's Activities in the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations:

In order to coordinate the activities of both governmental and non-governmental organizations for the promotion of the idea of dialogue among civilizations, the Islamic Republic of Iran founded the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations (ICDAC), as an organization whose primary mission is to promote the concept of a global structure based on mutual understanding and tolerance. During these years, the ICDAC has planned and implemented appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote this concept, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, with a view to the promotion of the idea of dialogue among civilizations. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran held numerous conferences and meetings in Iran and around the globe with participation and contribution of many countries and international organizations to promote this idea and find new means and ways for strengthening dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding between and within civilizations.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran has worked with the Department of the Public Information in the United Nations in strengthening the dialogue among civilizations. In this regard and according to the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 2004 annual session of the Committee on Information, a new section was inserted in the annual resolution, namely, "United Nations public information policies and activities". Based on this section, entitled "Role of the Department of the Public Information in strengthening the dialogue among civilizations", the General Assembly encourages the Department of Public Information to provide the necessary support for the dissemination of information pertaining to, inter alia, dialogue among civilizations and to take due steps in fostering the culture of dialogue among civilizations via all mass media, such as the Internet, print, radio and television.[5] This initiative led to launching a series of seminars, by the Department of Public Information on the United Nations, in 2004 and 2005 namely, "Unlearning Intolerance" and "Islamophobia". They were successful steps in engaging civil society leaders and a wider audience in ways to best meet the challenge of these kinds."

[5]. The Secretary-General was requested to submit a report in this regard to the Committee on Information at each annual session.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has also actively participated in all respective efforts and activities made by such international organizations as UNESCO and Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC).

3.1. Activities of the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations (ICDAC)

The International Centre for Dialogue Among Civilizations (ICDAC) was officially set up on 9 December 1998[6] after the proposal of proclaiming 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The ICDAC is primarily an organization dedicated to promote the concept of a global structure based on mutual understanding and tolerance. To achieve that goal, the Centre sets forth its goals as follows:

- To promote dialogue among civilizations and cultures on an international scale as a means of advancing the interpretation of the UN Charter and of improving human well-being.
- To promote and expand the culture of dialogue at the national level.
- To promote the culture of peace in order to foster peaceful coexistence and prevent human rights violations.
- To help establish and broaden the international civil society through cultural interaction among nations.
- To strengthen spiritual, moral and religious culture.
- To conduct research on the significance and possible interpretations of Dialogue Among Civilizations and to release the findings nationally and internationally

Furthermore, The ICDAC pays attention to diverse disciplines, and its activities have been organized to achieve preeminent goals in the fields of scientific research, information, and participation in and convening of domestic, regional, and international conferences and seminars.

Up to now, the ICDAC has pursued and performed numerous activities, which could be summarized as follows:

Research projects

- Compilation, writing, and translation of tens of books and more than 200 papers in the Human and Social Sciences, such as:
- The Role of Social Sciences in Dialogue among Civilizations,
- Playing with Modernity,
- Economic Obstacles to An International Dialogue
- An Investigation of the Theories and Strategies of Dialogue
- Iranian Thinkers And the Possibility of Dialogue with West
- Translation of two Encyclopedia:
- The Encyclopedia of Human History, Volume 5,
- The Encyclopedia of Dialogue among Civilizations

Instructional Activities

[6] The foundation of the ICDAC and its missions has been issued as United Nations Documents: A/54/291

The ICDAC has already organized a wide range of educational and scientific Programme for the public benefit, including offering course programme, holding workshops, lecture sessions, and seminars, in which a large number of both scholars and laymen participated. According to the statistics, about 18500 participants have benefited from the course Programme and lecture sessions, and also about 4750 people have taken part in the instructional workshops. Some of the courses are as follows:

- The Theoretical foundations of Liberalism
- Islamic World and the Human Civilization
- The Population Problems of the World Today
- Interactive Ideas in Islam and Christianity

Publications:

a. Books

Publishing numerous books in the field of world cultures and civilizations has been one of the successful activities of this center. The ICDAC has already published 205 books (including writings, translations, and bilingual series) in different subjects pertaining to dialogue among civilizations. Some of these books are as follows:

- -The Spirit of Protestantism,
- -Philosophy in the Ancient Christianity,
- -The Path of Buddha,
- -The Heart of Islam,
- -Legends from Africa,
- -German Lyrics,
- -Japan: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
- -Singapore: From the 77iird World to the First World,
- -Marco Polo in Iran

b. Periodicals:

- Report on Dialogue (monthly periodical), 16 issues have already been published, each of them has specific subject, including Diversity of Cultures (No. 8), Art and Dialogue among Civilizations (No. 10),the Central Asia (No. 11), Mesopotamia (No. 14), Asia Minor (No. 15).
- Pol-e-Firoozeh (the Turquoise Bridge) Quarterly: 14 issues, including: Japan, India, Mythology, Theater, and Music, Poland
- Silsilat al Hawar periodical (in Arabic): 3 issues.

Furthermore, a wide variety of articles, lectures, and roundtable discussions (taken from different cultural events in the world pertaining to Dialogue among Civilizations) ,as an ongoing project of the Center, are being collected in the ICDAC, to be used as a source of information. Up to now, more than 3600 papers and lectures in Persian, English, French, German, Arabic, and Russian languages have been collected. Some of the Russian texts have been translated into Persian. A voluminous series of the articles is expected to be published (in about 20 volumes) in the near future. Some documentary films about Dialogue among Civilizations (including interviews with thinkers and artists) have also been made by or by order of the ICDAC.

Cooperation with International Organizations and Personalities

The ICDAC has already had cooperation (in the form of intermittent seminar; and presentations) and communication with a considerable number of the international institutions, few examples are as follows:

- Schloss Neuhardenberg Foundation in Berlin-Germany
- University of Bonn- Germany
- The International Academy of Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizaiiom-Warsaw, Poland
- Casa Asia- Barcelona, Spain
- UNESCO
- UNICEF
- The Islamic Conference Organization
- -The Japan Foundation

It should be mentioned that supporting NGOs to hold festivals and cultural events has also been one of the continuous activities of the Center.

The ICDAC has also participated actively in many conferences held by other international institutions, such as:

- The International Forum of East-West Dialogue- Barcelona, Spain
- Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures: Comprehension and Mutual Understanding- Liechtenstein
- International Forum on Globalization and a Dialogue among Civilizations-Tbilisi, Georgia
- International Conference on Diversity of Education- Verona, Italy Conference of Islam and democracy- London, England
- Conference of Dialogue among Civilizations- Ukrain
- Dialogue among Civilizations: The Key 10 the Safe Future- Warsaw, Poland
- Conference on. Dialogue of Cultures or Conflict of Civilizations?- Kyrgyzistan
- Dialogue between East and West- Germany
- Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations- Salzburg, Austria
- Dialogue of Religions and Cultures- Nicosia, Cyprus.

Participation of ICDAC in International Activities:

- Cooperation in holding the conference "How to continue Dialogue among Civilizations", Damascus (Financial Contribution)
- Cooperation in the Dialogue among Civilizations Seminar, Bangladesh (Financial Contribution)
- Cooperation with the European Headquarters of the United Nations, Geneva, in an exhibition of Plastic Arts, Ethnic and International Music and Film
- Cooperation with the UNESCO's National Commission in Iran in the publication of the book " Prehistoric Cultures of the Southeast Caspian Coasts to the Bronze Age"

- Cooperation with the International Society for Iranian Culture, New York, in holding the Dialogue among Civilizations Conference titled "Review of Dialogue among Civilizations, a Call for New World Order"
- Cooperation in holding the second seminar of "West & East, Iran & Germany", 2003
- Cooperation with the Japanese Embassy in holding the Symposium titled "Tradition, Modernity and their Interaction"
- Cooperation with the Southern University of Denmark in holding the roundtable titled "Woman and Globalization Summit"

International organizations with which ICDAC has had joint projects and cooperation:

- International Academy of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, Warsaw, Poland:
  - Participation in the Academy's conference and submitting articles;
  - Academy's invitation of ICDAC director of International Affairs to deliver his article in the department of Political Science of Poland's Academy of Science
  - Visit of Academy members to Iran to attend the conference entitled: "Role of NGOs in the Realization of Dialogue among Civilizations", held at Tehran University, with ICDAC cooperation;
  - Joint discussion sessions on the future cooperative projects in publications and other joint projects

- Ibn Khaldun Center, Warsaw, Poland:
  This center has proposed several projects to ICDAC, which will probably be carried out in future:
  - Translation of the book "Jame-o-Tavarikh" by Khajeh Rashid-e-Din Fazlollah Hamedani into Polish;
  - Preparing the English Illustrated Series of Ancient Civilizations for publication;
  - Publication of the "Studies on Islam in Europe"

- University of Bonn, Germany:
  - Series of sessions between Iranian and German thinkers in the joint Programme entitled; "Dialogue of East & West: Iran & Germany"

- International Academy of Philosophy, Lichtenstein:
  - Participation in the Academy's conference entitled "Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures; a Way to Mutual Understanding";

- Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Germany:
  - Signing an agreement between this foundation and ICDAC, according to which the two sides will jointly work on several activities such as research projects, seminars, and promotion of Dialogue among Civilizations;
  - ICDAC and this foundation have held joint summits,, as well as a joint conference

in Tehran, titled: "Friedrich Nietzsche, the Transnational Philosopher" Stiftung Neuhardenberg,

- Stiftung neuhardenberg, Germany:
  - Numerous discussion sessions between Iranian and German thinkers on "Concepts on Dialogue among Civilizations"

- Institute for a Culture of Pea... Tatarestan, Russia:
  - Joint session and agreement on several cultural projects such as cooperation of ICDAC with this Institute on Conflict Resolution Lessons;

- Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation:
  - Several joint sessions on cultural activities, specially with regard to the issue of Dialogue among Civilizations;

- World Economic Forum (WEF):
  - Participation in some of the WEF summits, including the Salzburg Summit (Austria);

- Department of Educational Science, University of Verona, Italy:
  - Participation in the University's conference entitled: "Variety of Educational Systems"

Finally, more detailed information about ICDAC's activities may be found on its website: www.dialoguecentre.org

3.2. Holding Conferences and Meetings:

After adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilization in November 2001 and up to now, the Islamic Republic of Iran has held numerous conferences and meetings, some of which are as follows:

2001 (November-December):

International Children and Young Adults' Art Exhibition and Competition (celebrating Dialogue among Civilizations) / Dec.22-Jan.4 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults International Affairs

Seminar on Counter Effects of Arabic and Persian Literature (Past-Present-Future) / Tehran, Iran/ December 6-8, 2001 / Organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Qom's Mofid University

International seminar "Dialogue among Iranian and World Architecture and Urban Planning in the Islamic Era / November 8, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International seminar "Dialogue among Iranian and World Architecture and Urban Planning in Ancient Times / November 7, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International Conference "Dialogue Among Civilizations through Higher Education" / November 5-7, 2001/ Tehran, Iran / Organized by Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP)

International seminar "Exchanges of the Culture of Iranian Architecture and Urban Planning from a Technological Point of View / November 4, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International seminar "Modernity and its Impact on the Culture of Iranian Architecture and Urban Planning" / November 3, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International seminar "Dialogue among Iranian and World Architecture and Urban Planning in the Islamic Era / November 8, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

2002:

The Exhibition of Views: A journey to architectural culture of the nations, November 2 - 5, 2002 / Organized by ICDAC's "Architecture and Urban planning research group" in collaboration with Tehran University's society of architectures engineers and Choghazanbil's company of consultant engineers

International conference on Islam and world peace / October 29-30 / Organized by ICDAC

Professor Alvin Plantinga to come to Iran for a series of lectures / 19-27 October 2002 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC and Qom University

Mysticism: A Bridge Among Cultures (Honoring Ceremony for Prof. Anne Mary Schimmel) / Oct 14-15, 2002 / Allameh Amini Hall, Tehran University, Tehran / Organized by Vice-Chancellor's Office for Research, Tehran University, Alzahra University and ICDAC

1st Educational Seminar on "Dialogue among Civilizations and Global Issues: Simulation of International Talks" / Aug 31 to Sept 3, 2002 / Tehran / Organized by School of International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the UN University

Seminar on "Dialogue among Civilizations and the Nimrooz Civilization's Domain" /June 10-11, 2002 / Zabol, Iran / Organized by ICDAC and the University of Zabol

International seminar on "Centre and Periphery" / May 1-2, 2002 / Isfahan / Organized by ICDAC's department of philosophy and "Farzan rooz" publication

Gathering on Dialogue among Civilizations: Germany and Iran / Bonn museum / Organized by ICDAC

Round table on History, Culture and Dialogue / March 12th, 2002 / Tehran University, College of Literature and Human Sciences, Kamal Hall, Tehran, Iran / Organized by Association of "women researchers in the course of the history" and Tehran University's Faculty of History

Examples of Cultural Exchange between Iran and other Civilizations (Anthropology Articles) / March 5th, 2002 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC, Iranian Sociology Association and Shahid Beheshti University

Gathering on Cross-cultural Dialogue and Different Strata of the society / Mazandaran University / 28 February, 2002

Gathering on Dialogue among Civilizations / 27 February 2002 / Khoozestan, Iran / Organized by ICDAC, Iranian Sociology Association, Shahid Chamran University and Bureau of culture and Islamic guidance

International Seminar on Iran-Austria Architecture & Urban Planning Exchanges / February 24-27, 2002 / Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC, Shahid Beheshti University, Vienna University of Technology, and Institute of X-Change Austria-Iran

Seminar on Socrates, the Philosopher of Dialogue / Feb 24-25, 2002 / Knowledge and Philosophy Association, Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC & Cultural Research Bureau

First Culture and Civilization Festival of Persian Gulf Coast Dwellers/ February 12-March 3, 2002 / Qeshm, Iran / Organized by Qeshm Free Zone Organization in collaboration with Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, University of Science and Technology, Cultural Heritage Organization, and Iran Touring and Tourism Organization

First Conference of Researches on Persian Language and Literature / February 3-4, 2002 / Tarbiat-e Modares University, Tehran, Iran / Organized by Scientific Association of Persian Language and Literature, Academy of Persian Language and Literature, Tarbiat-e Modares University, Islamic Culture and Communication Organization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ICDAC and Channel 4 of IRIB

2003:

Roundtable titled Globalization of Economy and Women and its Cultural Aspects / Tehran, Iran / December 13, 2003 / Organized by ICDAC's Political Science Group

Cultural Studies Seminar / Tehran University's Faculty of Social Sciences, Tehran, Iran / December 14-15, 2003 / Organized by and ICDAC's Social Sciences Group

Joint seminar on Cultural Research Book Review / Tehran, Iran / December 16, 2003 / Organized by the Anthropological Research Centre of the Cultural Heritage Organization and ICDAC's Social Science Group

Seminar titled: "Dialogue of East and West – Iran & Germany: Constraints and Possibilities of Cultural Scientific Cooperation in the Age of Globalization" / May 13-14, 2003 / ICDAC Headquarters, Tehran / Organized by ICDAC and the University of Bonn

Workshop on "Political Science and Dialogue of Civilizations" / May 15 - 21, 2003 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC's Political Science Dept.

Lecture entitled "Interpretation of Gathasin the Zoroastrian Religion" by Dr. Hosein Vahidi / April 28, 2003 / ICDAC Library / Organized by ICDAC's Theology & Religions Dept

Dialogue of Religions in Iran's Society – Highlighting the Status of Zoroastrians / February 4, 2003 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC's Social Science Group

Lecture: "David Bohm on Dialogue" / February 18, 2003 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC's Social Science Dept.

2004:

Conference on the Role of Language in the Dialogue among Civilizations / 24-25 April, 2004 / Isfahan, Iran / Organized by Isfahan University, ICDAC.

Discussion session titled "Rationality in Islam" / Tehran, Iran / January 6, 2004 / Organized by ICDAC's Theology & Religions Dept

Discussion session on Surveying Thousand and One Nights in Iran / Tehran, Iran / January 6, 2004 / Organized by ICDAC's Social Science Dept and CHO's Anthropological Research Centre

Discussion session on "Novel and Psychological Review / Tehran, Iran / January 7, 2004 / Organized by ICDAC's Art & Literature Dept

International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations / Jan 7, 2004 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by the International Association of Universities (IAU)

Discussion session, review of the book: Woman and Power; Jan 13, 2004 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC Social Science Group and Anthropological Research Center

2005:

- International Conference on Environment, Peace, and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures[7] (May 9-10, 2005)

The International Conference on Environment, Peace and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, organized jointly by the Department of environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and co-sponsored by the United Nations University (UNU) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was held in Tehran from 9-10 May 2005. It was opened by His Excellency Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Monday, 9 May 2005. Dr. Klaus Toepfer, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP, delivered the message of Mr. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, to the Conference.

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[7]. The Dialogue Among Civilizations Bulletin which is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has summarized the report of this Conference; VOLUME 108, NO.1, FRIDAY, 13 MAY 2005 and could be reached at:
http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/ymbvol108num1e.pdf

Over 70 participants from more than 30 countries participated, including several ministers and other high-level representatives. The purpose of the Conference was to examine the interaction between environment, peace and security in the context of multilateral cultural dialogue among civilizations and discuss the need for multilateralism and meaningful dialogue. The Conference sought to underpin the imperative of multilateralism and meaningful dialogue among civilizations as a means for joint action against dehumanizing poverty, violence, increasing reliance on military might and continued erosion of the democratic practice, both at national and international levels.

The Conference included an introductory session on progress on environment and peace issues and an overview of the nexus between environment, peace and the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples. A special high-level interactive ministerial roundtable was held during the afternoon of Monday, 9 May on the rationale for the Conference, and working sessions were held on Monday and Tuesday focusing on issues surrounding environment and conflict, environment and human security, and dialogue. An interactive discussion on conclusions from the Conference was held on Tuesday afternoon.

The Tehran Conference, a highly analytical gathering of a good number of prominent and well-known academics and experts in the field, and a number of high-level government officials, succeeded in, taking a step further towards exploring the nexus between environment and peace and security. It also addressed the issue of post-conflict reconstruction of environmental damages, and stressed the imperative of development of binding new international legal instruments to ensure environmental integrity during armed conflict.

The Conference also looked into the contribution dialogue proper -hence, dialogue among civilizations and cultures - can and should make towards the promotion of peace and security - as the essential and irreplaceable prerequisite for the effective and meaningful preservation, protection and long-term management of environment. It took as its premise the fundamental concept that genuine dialogue on a global scale, involving all stakeholders and across the board, provides the only way forward towards ensuring meaningful and effective international cooperation, in all fields, including in the field of environment.

The Tehran Conference concluded with a number of practical Conclusions and Recommendations, including at the United Nations and its extended family - which deserve commensurate attention at various levels. It also lent support to the proposals of President Khatami, made at UNESCO, for the establishment of a "Global Forum for the Promotion of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures".

The Conference has also adopted a final document entitled: "Tehran Declaration" which emphasizes that the concept of a new model of dialogue among civilizations and cultures based on mutual respect and recognition must be put in place. In this respect, the Declaration has also highlighted the need for a new model of dialogue in the context of new and devastating environmental threats at a planetary level and goes further to emphasize that the reform process taking place within the United Nations should remain faithful to the spirit of the Charter and genuine multilateralism and provide hope to the international community for a future of effective multilateralism based on mutual understanding, mutual respect, and the principle of dialogue. It should be noted that this Declaration, as an annex to the letter of President Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the UN Secretary General, was released as UN document. A/59/825

3.3. Promotion of the idea of Dialogue among Civilizations within the framework of the UNESCO

The quest for a dialogue among civilizations is deeply entrenched in and associated with interaction among civilizations, cultures and nations, especially in a multilateral context. In regard to UNESCO's Constitution and the various programmes and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and General Conference since the establishment of the Organization, the promotion of dialogue in the service of peace – in order to build "peace in the minds of men" – is clearly one of the main themes of UNESCO's mission. Globalization and the emergence of new contemporary challenges and threats to humankind make the need for dialogue among civilizations ever more topical. A principal objective of a dialogue is to bridge the gap in knowledge about other civilizations, cultures and societies, to lay the foundations for dialogue based on universally shared values and to undertake concrete activities, inspired and driven by dialogue, especially in the areas of education, cultural diversity and heritage, the sciences and communication and media.

In past years and especially so since the tragic events of September 11 2001, the activities promoting a dialogue among civilizations have attracted renewed attention at UNESCO. Though this has been an effort of long standing in its work Programme, it has received new impetus through the resolution by UNESCO's General Conference on the fight against terrorism, adopted in November 2001.

Promoting dialogue among civilizations and cultures is indeed a key component of UNESCO's mission and activities. In UNESCO's medium-term strategy for 2002-2007 (document 31 C/4), the dialogue among civilizations has been designated as one of only twelve strategic objectives for the Organization, within the Programme defined for Culture. Reference to the pivotal role of the dialogue among civilizations is also well anchored in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

More recently, UNESCO aims to broaden the scope of the dialogue and to make it more relevant to contemporary threats and challenges, facing international community, by reviewing and assessing the concept and past approaches, identifying and overcoming obstacles to dialogue, including new and old ignorance and prejudices, potentially leading to new fractures and conflicts, especially at local and community levels.

Participation in conferences

During the UN Year itself and since then, many conferences and meetings have been organized exploring the meaning of dialogue and its importance. Few examples are referred to hereunder:

The conference held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in April 2001 provided a valuable opportunity for regional leaders and representatives to discuss key issues. This opportunity occurred again on the other side of the world when UNESCO and the United Nations University organized an international conference on the theme of dialogue among civilizations in Tokyo in July 2001, as well as other conferences in Vietnam, Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan, Albania and the UN headquarters. The Islamic Republic of Iran, through its Permanent Delegation to UNESCO has participated and played an active role either through helping organize them or actively participate in the debates.

International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples was held at UNESCO Headquarter on April 5, 2005 in which more than 300 participants, including eminent academics and decisions makers from the Arab region, Asia, Europe and the United States attended. During the Conference, the Director-General of UNESCO praised President Khatami, for first launching "the political and intellectual movement which re-introduced dialogue as a central notion for the management of world affairs," leading to the proclamation of 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilization. "Such dialogue," Mr Matsuura continued, "must by necessity be soundly based on democracy, human rights and basic liberties, the sole guarantors of lasting peace and development and indispensable conditions for reconciliation."

During the conference, speakers and participants paid tribute to Pope John Paul II and to his contribution to dialogue, peace and understanding.

In his keynote address, President Khatami praised UNESCO's contribution to dialogue among civilizations, highlighting UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (adopted in 2003), its Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (adopted in 2001), the preparation of a convention on cultural diversity, and ongoing work on the ethics of science.

The events of September 2001, President Khatami argued, proved that "dialogue among civilizations had become a political and economic emergency." The President went on to explain that while civilizations have been influencing one another for millennia, the notion of dialogue was novel in that it implied a "conscious character". "It is possible to influence, or be influenced, unawares, while the definition of dialogue, by necessity, requires conscious communication."

Pleading for the moralization of politics, the President argued that "The political translation of dialogue among civilizations would consist in arguing that culture, morality and art must prevail on politics. [...] As long as politics remain estranged from morality and impervious to culture [...] human rights will not be defended..."

President Khatami insisted that "dialogue among civilizations signifies, politically, the rejection of terrorism and violence. [...] It also embodies the fight against a long list of ills that affect humanity as a whole such as the terrible hunger that is afflicting the world, killing children and adults, growing environmental degradation, threats against the family, moral permissiveness, and the deprivation of entire regions from education resources for children and adolescents."

President Khatami launched the idea of creating a non-governmental organization to promote dialogue among civilizations and said he would welcome suggestions and proposals for this project.[8]

In his keynote address, the President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, said that by attending the conference he meant to add his voice to those of "men and women who believe deeply in a less uncertain future for our world. [...] Dialogue among civilizations is one of the motors of progress," President Bouteflika said, "It allows for the dissemination of innovations produced within each of them. It is the vector of the perfectability of human kind as a whole, of the never-ending task of humanizing humanity."

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[8]. The Statement of H.E. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been issued as United Nations Document: A/60/77

"Terrorism is not part of the matrix of Moslem civilization," declared President Bouteflika. "Nothing can justify this murderous folly and senseless slaughter. [...] Nothing in the recent or distant past, nor in the present, can give substance to the idea of a shock of civilizations between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The two civilizations have lived together - peacefully for the most part, only exceptionally and marginally in a brutal manner - in relations of mutual influence and dialogue, more or less active according to the period. Each partner has been in turn master and student, adapting domestically the innovations that seemed most suitable, even when, at the outset, they had been imposed by force."

President Bouteflika denounced the "technological monopoly exercised by a very small number of States that impose their digital language on the rest of the planet which, impotent and passive, consumes the products of these new technologies."

Following the keynote addresses, participants engaged in a question and answer session with the presidents.

3.4. Working with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) welcomed, in July 1, 1999, the Tehran Declaration on Dialogue among Civilizations, issued at the Islamic Symposium on Dialogue among Civilizations. This Declaration encompasses general principle, as well as areas of dialogue among civilizations, participants in dialogue, mechanisms for the promotion of the culture of dialogue among civilizations and also application of dialogue among civilizations to critical areas of international relations. Furthermore and with a view to translating these commitments to action, the Declaration directed methodology, mechanisms, structures and financing of the dialogue and mandated the Secretary-General of the OIC to designate a focal point to actively pursue the dialogue among civilizations. A high level group of governmental experts also convened. This group prepared the draft Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations which was adopted by the Twenty-seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in June 2000, before submitting it to the United Nations General Assembly for adoption.

Furthermore and after the adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among civilizations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has actively contributed to the implementation of this Global Agenda. In this regard, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in partnership with other organizations and institutions held a number of pertinent Conferences to improve the culture of dialogue among civilizations and explore new theoretical and practical inputs for strengthening this culture as a prevailing discourse among nations. ISESCO believes, as its Director General has emphasized that: "Dialogue among civilizations reflects a pressing need, dictated by the accelerating world mutations prevailing at this critical juncture of world history. It has become a strategic option, mandated by the major challenges confronting the international community, for it constitutes the noblest means of coexistence among nations and peoples, indeed the remedy to all factors of tension and conflict at the origin of international crises."

Throughout all this process and efforts of the OIC, the Islamic Republic of Iran has played an active role. Following is a brief chronological report on this contribution by the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- 25-27 June 2002: The 29th ICFM, by virtue of operative paragraph 1 of its resolution No, 57/29-P on the issue, the draft of which had been submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran, decided to establish a high-level open-ended Committee to draw up a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the relevant OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions and its submission to the next session of the ICFM for approval.
- 28-30 May 2003; The 30th ICFM in the Islamic Republic of Iran, by adopting resolutions No. 43/30-P on the subject, called for the convening of the meeting of the abovementioned Committee to draw up the supposed plan and submit it to the 31st ICFM for approval.
- 16-17 October 2003: The 10lri Islamic Summit Conference adopted resolutions No. 42/10-P (IS) on the subject. The Summit Conference in its resolution called for the convening of the meeting of the abovementioned Committee to draw up the supposed plan and submit it to the 31st ICFM for approval.
- 6-7 April 2004: the high-level open-ended Committee to draw up a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the relevant OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations was convened at the OIC Headquarters under the Chairmanship of the Islamic Republic of Iran and finalized the text of a "comprehensive plan for the implementation of the OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations." (OIC/IGGED AC/2004/REP/FINAL) The Group submitted the aforementioned document to the 31st ICFM for its approval.
- 14-16 June 2004: The 31SI ICFM by virtue of its Resolution No, 49/31-P on the subject adopted the comprehensive plan for the implementation of the 0IC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations, as one of the reference executive documents with respect to the issue of Dialogue among Civilizations.
- 8-9 March 2005: Third Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among the OIC Member States was convened in the Islamic Republic of Iran and adopted "the Principles and Guidelines for the Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among 01C Member States" as a basic document for promoting dialogue and confidence among Islamic countries. The aforesaid document, the draft of which has been prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran, was submitted to the 32na ICFM for its approval.
- 30 April-2 May 2005: The meeting of the Senior Officials of the OIC Member States, preparatory to the 32nd ICFM, by virtue of draft resolution No, 12/32-P, adopted "the Principles and Guidelines for the Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among OIC Member States",
- 3-5 May 2005: The 28th Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs preparatory to the 32nd ICFM, by adopting a draft resolution on Dialogue among Civilizations submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran, welcomed and supported the intention of H.E. President Mohammad Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a Center for Dialogue among Civilizations and express the readiness of the relevant bodies of the OIC System for close cooperation with that Center in realizing its objectives.